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SUMMARY OF NATIONAL PAPER*

1. Definitions

1.1. Science and technology must be placed at the service of a global concept of development which is not limited to economic considerations, which concerns all States, and which satisfies the needs of every human being.

1.2. The Vienna Conference must be viewed in the perspective of a new international economic order. The diversity of structures and the various modes of development must be taken into account at the Conference.

1.3. Scientific knowledge and its application through technical know-how must be considered from the standpoint of their interaction with development. The existence of political will, improved integration of scientific and technological activities in development plans and proper identification of contributions in terms of time-scales are prerequisites if science and technology are to serve development efficiently. However, training plays the crucial role in this process.

2. Critical evaluation of the case of France

2.1. French science and technology and the challenge of development

Many French bodies contribute to scientific and technological co-operation.

The VIIth Plan (1976-1980) provides explicitly for a priority programme of scientific and technological co-operation with the developing countries, which takes the form of efforts undertaken more particularly by the public sector but in which the private sector, too, participates.

* The designations employed, the presentation of material and the views expressed in this paper are those of the Government of France and do not necessarily reflect the practices and views of the Secretariat of the United Nations in any of these respects.

2.2. French co-operation: a negotiated co-operation

In principle, French scientific and technological co-operation with the developing countries is negotiated on the base of programmes of activities, including training, with the aim of promoting economic and social development by increasing the scientific and technological potential of the partner countries.

This principle is not applied without difficulty. Experience shows, however, that it does not preclude scientific and technological co-operation which is widely diversified as regards site and content.

2.3. Content of activities

2.3.1. Action carried out by public institutions: three types of action, usually concomitant, have been undertaken in the light of economic and social trends in the partner countries.

The first concerns the acquisition of knowledge of the natural milieu and its development by man.

The second concerns the structuration of the economic growth of the partner countries, whether in relation to agricultural or industrial production, physical planning or education.

The third concerns control of the secondary effects of economic development (pollution, environment, social problems linked to rapid change and urbanization, etc.).

2.3.2. Action carried out by enterprises and industrial research centres: many French enterprises are carrying out research designed to meet the needs of the developing countries. Collective industrial and technological research centres - laboratories common to several enterprises and co-financed by the public authorities - have drawn up research programmes aimed at enabling the French industrial sector to help to increase the technological capacity of the developing countries.

2.4. Role of information

Scientific and technological information is an essential element in the exchange of information and the transfer of technologies to developing countries. France is focusing its efforts on the issue of scientific and technological publications, the provision of information materials, technical assistance for the establishment of documentation infrastructure and the provision of information for practitioners.

3. Priority accorded to training

From the standpoint of scientific and technological co-operation, training should help to increase the potential of the developing countries, taking into account the diversity of situations.

It is for that reason that France has always favoured the creation of training establishments and channels in the partner countries. In that regard, the importance of specific training for well-defined functions must be stressed. This often necessitates an adaptation of existing channels.

Thus, training linked to research should no longer be limited to the training of research workers and teachers. It should also encompass the training of technicians and managers. Moreover, research has itself become a means of training for production.

Training also encompasses the fields of documentation and information, and is provided for those specializing in the formulation of scientific and technological policies.

Lastly, new training channels are emerging: "twinnings" between teaching or research establishments, specialized cycles of instruction alternating academic training and practical training, "schools without walls" providing "à la carte" training, assistance to young research workers, and support for scientific and technological policy systems in developing countries.

4. Future trends

The action of France in the field of scientific and technological co-operation with the developing countries bears witness to its realistic approach to the fulfilment of its responsibility with regard to the improvement of the contribution of science and technology to development, especially in the case of the least developed countries. It stresses the priority to be given to training and the need for negotiated co-operation.

Utilizing new formulas such as that of "twinning", involving exchanges within the framework of joint programmes, it also seeks to valorize the traditional or recent achievements of the developing countries, which constitutes an important element for the future of a world-wide policy for scientific and technological co-operation.